2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

F 585 789

common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

F 586

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

F [842]
F [941] [942]
F 887 586

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE.

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

791 832 [291] 431 152 584

241 312 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth downward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 476] A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20, according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is [887 957] left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious watering raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The overseers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose [656] duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (''), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987] ●

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

[1]) According to Mahmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)